



Making Art Making Change

# Annual Report 2023



# MESSAGE FROM OUR ARTISTIC DIRECTORS

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Last year brought increased attention to the crisis of loneliness in our community, with Toronto being named as one of the loneliest places in Canada. In the face of this, Making Art Making Change (MAMC) remained steadfast in its mission to bring people together and to strengthen community bonds.

To reach those most at-risk, we teamed up with community groups to bring art-making projects to neighbourhoods throughout the city. These projects were both in-person and virtual, creating opportunities for seniors and other equity-deserving communities to share their stories and build social connections.

It was a privilege to witness moments of collaboration and a sense of accomplishment as participants shared their lived experiences and creations with the group and a wider community audience. By fostering these bonds and providing this outlet for creative expression, we saw firsthand how community and creativity can transform lives, turning loneliness into joy and resilience.

These inspiring events demonstrated the profound difference that our programs make, helping participants feel more connected, valued, and supported. In this report, we are excited to share the details of our 2023 year with you. In the subsequent pages you will find an overview of our activities, highlight select projects, and share insights into the impact we've achieved over the past year.

As we look back on another successful year, we feel even more grateful for the communities in which we work, and for our alumni, partners, donors, staff, and volunteers.

**On behalf of the entire Making Art Making Change team, thank you!**

With our warmest regards,  
Elena Soní and Vanessa Barnett  
Artistic Directors



# WHO WE ARE



## Our Vision

MAMC envisions a stronger and kinder society by harnessing the power of art to open minds, break down barriers and shift cultural perceptions.

## Our Purpose

MAMC exists to strengthen connection, break isolation, and enrich people's lives one art-based project at a time.

## Our Work

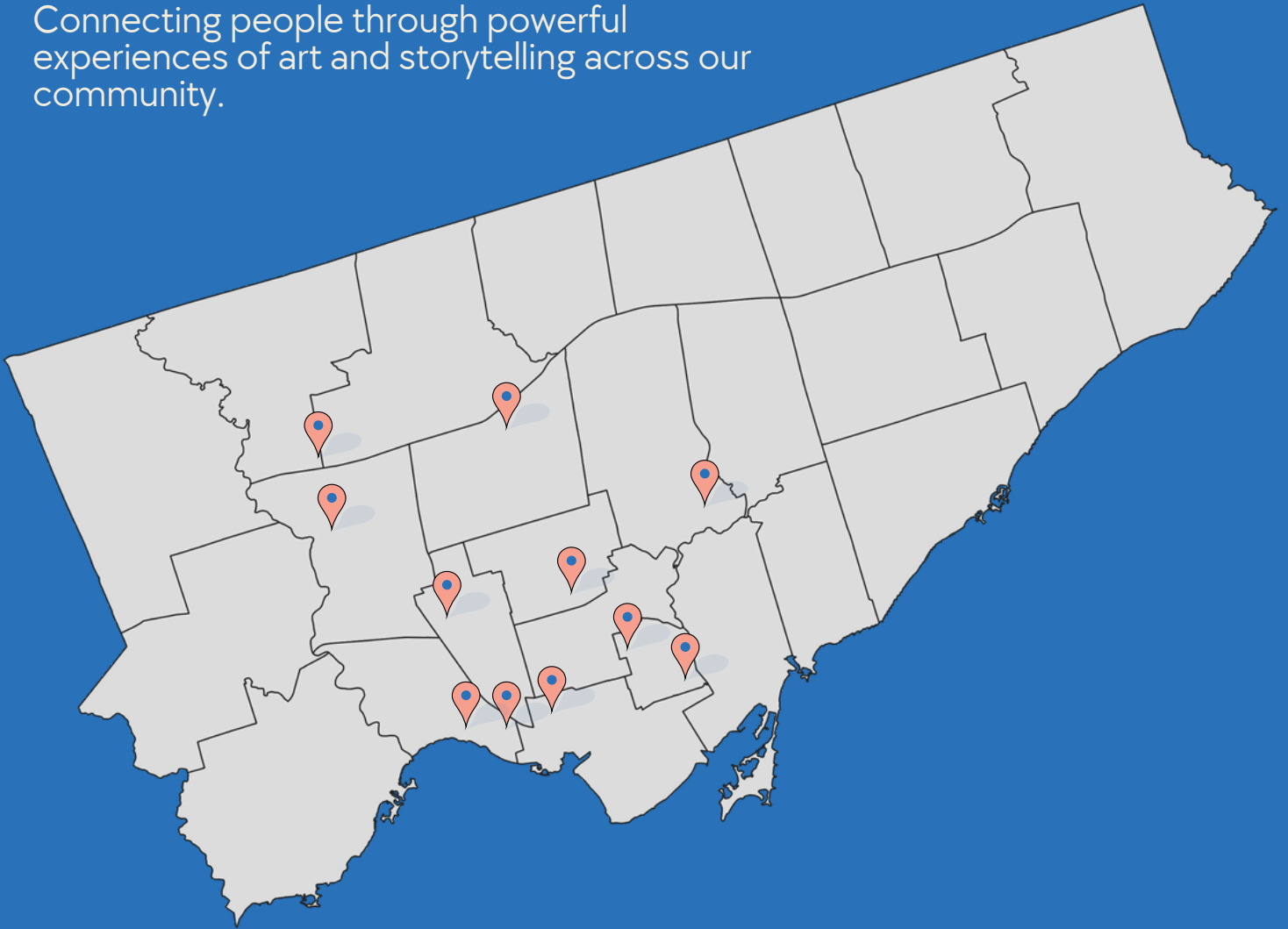
MAMC operates across the Greater Toronto Area in collaboration with local health and community agencies.

Our programs serve women, seniors, newcomers, youth, and other equity-deserving communities utilizing art to foster interconnected communities.

Led by skilled facilitators, participants experience self-discovery, leading to improved well-being and social connections. Our efforts culminate in group art exhibitions at prestigious cultural institutions, sparking dialogue and engagement.

# 2023 HIGHLIGHTS

Connecting people through powerful experiences of art and storytelling across our community.



470+

People connected through visual art-making workshops.

13

Community Partners

3

Public Exhibitions

13

Eight-week long workshops delivered



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: ENGAGING YOUTH

## Shadows of Racism Part 2: A Seat at the Table



Approximately 200 students from grades 9 to 12 participated in our second "Shadows of Racism" project.



Each student invited a guest to a symbolic table of diverse voices, celebrating family and community. This table served as a place of advocacy, where everyone had equal opportunities to listen, share, define, and influence without judgment or retribution. The project culminated in a three-day exhibition of the work at the Ontario Science Centre.



Through their discussion and artistic creations, students addressed issues like homelessness, food insecurity, healthcare, mental health, loss, family reunification and personal triumph.

### Partners:

- ALPHA Education
- Toronto District School Board
- Halton Catholic School Board
- Toronto Catholic District School Boards
- Ontario Science Centre (Exhibition Partner)

# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: WELCOMING NEWCOMERS TO SAFE SPACES

## Encounters with LGBTQ+



Spanish-speaking newcomers, primarily from Mexico and Ecuador, who fled violence and homophobia, participated in an eight-week workshop.

Art became a vibrant means of self-expression for these individuals as they began new lives away from their families and homeland. In a creative space filled with music, drawings and paintings emerged, reflecting their rich stories and experiences.

Each week, this safe and welcoming environment fostered deep connections and lasting friendships.

**Partner:**

Centre for Spanish-Speaking Peoples



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: CONNECTING WOMEN

## Encounters with New Mothers

MAMC offered young mothers a respite from the demands of broken sleep and daily routines.

Caregivers engaged with the infants, creating a safe and nurturing environment, while the women created art together.

The focus of the artwork sessions was to encourage the women to share their personal stories of motherhood, many of which involved navigating challenges alone due to immigration issues.

Our sessions fostered friendships and provided a platform for the women to discuss their struggles, loneliness, and ultimately, to celebrate their resilience in the face of adversity.

**Partner:**

Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre  
Roncesvalles Site



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: CELEBRATING SENIORS

## Getting to Know Our Neighbours

MAMC delivered eight workshops for participants from the Davenport-Perth Neighbourhood Health Centre's +55 group.

Participants created body maps by tracing their silhouettes onto corrugated cardboard. Using found objects and various art materials, participants built their own body of work each week adding layers of meaning and exploring different techniques.



Through their artwork, they shared their stories, lived experiences, memories, and culture through their artwork.

The program concluded with a well-attended celebration and an open house exhibit of their work at mason studio.

### **Partners:**

Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Health Centre  
mason studio (Exhibition Partner)



# PROJECT HIGHLIGHT: ACROSS GENERATIONS

## This is Who We Are

Grade 4 students participated alongside their grandparents and volunteer elders to create a mural as an expression of equity, diversity and inclusion within their school.

The project fostered community-building, encouraged social interaction across generations, and promoted collaboration among participants. Through this process, the group of 21 students and 13 adult participants developed skills and confidence, which led to the emergence of meaningful artwork.

The students and staff members also contributed their self-portraits to the mural, representing a truly collaborative school-wide effort. A total of 187 portraits were created. The school organized a celebration for the unveiling of the mural with students' speeches and joy all around.

**Partner:**

The Mabin School

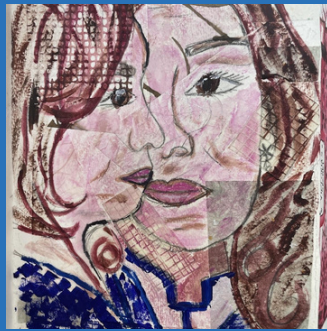




# 2023 PROJECTS GALLERY



Shadows of Racism Part 2:  
A Seat at the Table



Encounters with  
LGBTQ+



Encounters with  
Seniors



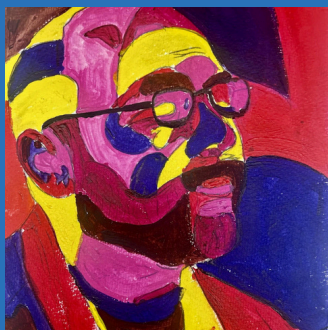
Encounters with  
New Mothers



Site of Encounters: A  
Conversation Amongst  
Caregivers



Art, Culture and Cuisine



Making Faces



This is Who We Are



No One Can Take Away  
All The Times I Danced



Together Dreaming of  
Pasts and Futures



Getting to Know  
Your Neighbours



# TESTIMONIALS AND RECOGNITION



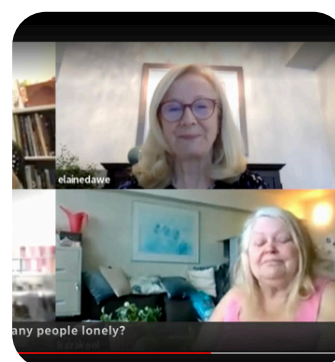
Select the picture to view the report.

## **MAMC Featured on CBC's The National - Why are People so Lonely?**

MAMC was featured in a CBC news report on the public health threat presented by loneliness. MAMC's programs were highlighted as an effective intervention to help connect patients experiencing loneliness.

*"I love you guys, I want you to know that you brought a lot of joy into my life."*

**Elaine, program participant featured in CBC news report.**



*"It has been a true joy to collaborate with MAMC on such an amazing exhibition...it was a new experience that opened my eyes, heart and soul to fresh ideas and connections with the community."*

**Ola, Program and Outreach Coordinator  
mason studio**

*"I never knew that art teaching could be like this. This is not the way I learned when I was in school."*

**Ze, Grandparent in the Intergenerational project "This is Who We Are" at The Mabin School, 2023**





# FINANCIAL REPORTING



## 2023 Revenue

Donations	\$139,600
Grants	\$70,000
Program Fees	\$58,301
Interest & Misc.	\$4,714

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**\$272,615**

## 2024 Expenses

Program & Staffing	\$161,269
Services & Consultants	\$9,692
Office & Administration	\$7,873
Fundraising	\$5,297
Promotion	\$4,033
Other	\$1,255

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**\$189,418**

**Revenue/ Expenses** **\$83,197**

**Accumulated Surplus  
End of Year** **\$230,761**

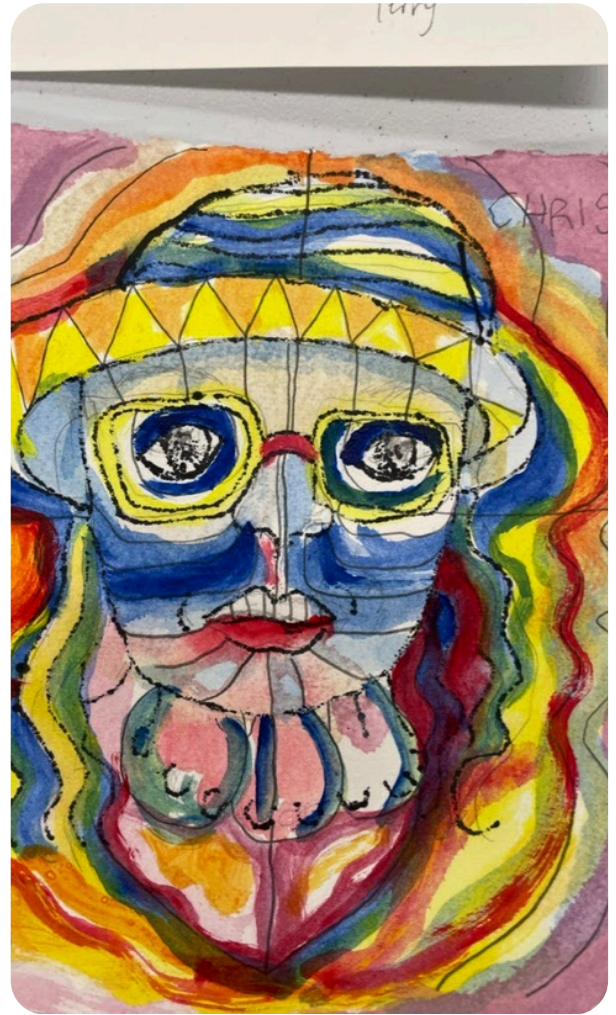
Auditors Report available upon request

# THANK YOU TO ALL OF OUR DONORS

*"[MAMC] reaches out to the elderly, the lonely, and new immigrants who feel at a loss of how to navigate our challenging and changing world.*

*Art is a wonderful medium to unleash hidden emotions and elusive creativity. Vanessa and Elena are amazing and gifted teachers who are our spirit guides in this colourful journey."*

**Martha McDonald, Donor**



Anonymous  
H. John McDonald Foundation  
Marjory and Ian McDonald  
McDonald Family Foundation  
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Blok Design  
Robin Farb-Eckler  
Bethany Harper Williams  
Trudy Michielson  
Ora Harris  
mason studio

# COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTEERS



## Community Partners

ALPHA Education  
Baycrest@Home  
The Centre for Spanish Speaking Peoples  
The Community Place Hub, Weston Mount-Denis  
Davenport Perth Neighbourhood Community Health Network  
Dixon Hall (Regent Park) and Progress Place (St James Town)  
Halton Regional District School Board  
The Koffler Centre of the Arts  
The Mabin School  
mason studio  
Museum of Contemporary Art  
Ontario Science Centre  
Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre  
Progress Place (St. James Town)  
Toronto Catholic School Board  
Toronto District School Board  
Toronto Neighbourhood Organization

## Board Members

Marjory McDonald (Chair)  
Gill Evans (Vice Chair)  
Gillian Graham (Secretary)  
Vanessa Eckstein - Director  
Pamela Meredith - Director  
Camara Miller - Director  
Dr. Ivan Silver - Director

## Advisory

Robin Farb-Eckler  
Vivek Sharma





Instagram  
@mamccanada

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Charitable registration number:  
770955870RR0001

All artwork in this report was created by MAMC project participants.